



Inside ICE

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JTTF ARRESTS OHIO MAN, THWARTS PLANNING FOR AL QAEDA BOMB PLOT

An investigation by ICE agents assigned to the FBI's Southern Ohio Joint Terrorism Task



Nuradin M. Abdi

Force has resulted in the indictment of a Somali man accused of plotting a bomb attack on an Ohio shopping mall.

On June 10, 2004, Nuradin M. Abdi, 32, a Somali national living in Columbus, Ohio, was charged in a four-count indictment with conspiracy to provide material support to terrorists and to al Qaeda. Abdi was also charged with fraudulently obtaining and using U.S. immigration and travel documents.

Government documents allege that Abdi re-entered the United States

from Africa in March 2000 using a U.S. immigration document gained through fraud. Abdi had previously obtained the travel document after concealing his planned travels to Africa to obtain training in "violent jihad," the indictment alleges.

Upon returning to Ohio, Abdi was met at the Columbus airport by Iyman Faris, a convicted al Qaeda

operative now serving a 20-year prison sentence for plotting to sever the cables of New York's Brooklyn Bridge and plotting to derail trains in Washington. Abdi and Faris allegedly initiated a plot to blow up a Columbus area shopping mall. The indictment alleges that Abdi received bomb-making instructions from one of the co-conspirators.

ICE agents detained Abdi on immigration violations on Nov. 28, 2003 after keeping watch on him during the Thanksgiving holiday. Over the next few months, these agents

worked closely with the FBI and with ICE's National Security Law Division and National Security Investigations Division at Headquarters to bring a criminal case against Abdi.

"Today's indictment demonstrates how the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security are working in partnership to prevent acts of terrorism," said Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. "Working with the nation's Joint Terrorism Task Forces, Homeland Security's ICE agents are able to investigate violations of immigration law as part of ongoing terrorism investigations. This is an important tool in our efforts to protect the nation against terrorism."



Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary Asa Hutchinson, left, briefs the media on ICE's role in the arrest of Nuradin Abdi as Attorney General John Ashcroft, center, and Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia look on.

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CERDA TESTIFIES ON ICE IMMIGRATION INITIATIVES

ICE's senior advisor to the assistant secretary told a House subcommittee that ICE's ability to enforce the nation's immigration laws is among the agency's most important tools in homeland security.

PUBLIC SECURITY

Senior Advisor Victor Cerda, who also serves as ICE's acting director of Detention and Removal Operations, testified June 15 before the Subcommittee of Infrastructure and Border Security of the House Select Committee on Homeland Security.

"By aggressively enforcing our immigration laws and targeting criminal aliens, we seek to deter criminal and terrorist organizations who threaten our way of life, and we seek to strengthen the legal immigration process for worthy applicants," Cerda said.

Cerda testified that ICE has established immigration enforcement priorities in an effort to restore integrity to the nation's immigration system. He said ICE has made the apprehension and removal of dangerous criminal aliens and national security threats ICE's top enforcement priority.

Emphasizing that prioritization does not mean ICE does not fully and fairly enforce all immigration law, Cerda said that "Our objective is to strategically target our resources and authorities on the most dangerous aliens in order to remove

them from the streets before they can do harm."

Cerda reviewed several ICE achievements, including the fact that ICE had removed almost 86,000 criminal aliens from the United States since March 1, 2003. He also noted the success of the "ICE Storm" initiative and discussed how the integration of legacy U.S. Customs and Immigration and Naturalization Service authorities had increased ICE's ability to combat a wide range of criminal and terrorist threats. Cerda said the establishment of ICE had also brought increased



Victor Cerda

coordination and cooperation with other federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.

ICE UNVEILS NEW ALTERNATIVE TO DETENTION

ICE has unveiled a new pilot program providing a less restrictive alternative to detention. The Intensive Supervision Appearance Program (ISAP) will be introduced June 21 at eight ICE locations across the United States.

The new program will be introduced in Baltimore, Philadelphia, Miami, St. Paul, Denver, Kansas City, San Francisco, and Portland, Ore.

"ISAP is an alternative to detention that further enables ICE to prioritize detaining criminals and other public safety and security risks," said Acting Director of Detention and Removal Operations Victor Cerda. "ISAP aims to promote integrity in the immigration system by helping to ensure compliance with court appearances and orders, and will likely relieve pressure on detention space in pilot cities by providing this alternative to aliens who might otherwise be detained."

ICE's Office of Detention and Removal Operations manages ISAP in partnership with Behavioral Interventions Inc. of Boulder, Colo. ISAP, one of several alternatives to detention pilot projects currently being tested, is a supervision pro-

gram in which case specialists are assigned to a limited caseload of participants and are responsible for monitoring those participants in the community by using tools such as electronic monitoring (bracelets), home visits, work visits and reporting by telephone. Case specialists will also assist participants in obtaining pro-bono counsel for their hearings and help them to receive other types of assistance to which they may be entitled.

In order to be eligible for participation in ISAP, an alien must be an adult with a confirmed identity who does not pose a threat to the community or national security. Additionally, ISAP will be available only to aliens who are not subject to mandatory detention; who are pending immigration court proceedings or are awaiting removal from the United States; and who will be residing within the managed area. ISAP is a voluntary program; all participants must agree to participate and comply with the conditions of their release. Aliens who violate the conditions of their release may face detention or increased supervisory restrictions. ICE will evaluate the program at the end of the pilot.

Inside ICE is an e-newsletter produced by the ICE Office of Public Affairs to inform the public about the mission, operations and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Please send comments and contributions to: Russ.Bergeron@dhs.gov
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ICE SEIZES EXOTIC CARS, ARRESTS 9 IN MAJOR CASE

An ICE wiretap investigation of a drug trafficking operation based in Downey, Calif., ended June 10 with the arrest of nine men and the seizure of an armored Mercedes-Benz and a Ferrari Spyder.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

The arrests and the seizures culminate an investigation that focused on a drug organization headed by Downey resident George Martinez, who allegedly imported cocaine from Mexico and oversaw its distribution throughout the United States and into Canada.

"Today's arrests demonstrate ICE's continuing commitment to target those exploiting America's borders for criminal purposes," said Loraine Brown, Special Agent-in-Charge for ICE investigations in Los Angeles. "Our goal, as the primary investigative agency in the Department of Homeland Security, is to disrupt and deter activities that pose a threat to our nation's welfare and public safety."

The defendants arrested June 10 were charged in a criminal complaint with multiple conspiracies to import and distribute controlled substances. In 2002, a federal drug task force consisting of special agents with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the Federal Bureau of Investigation and IRS-Criminal Investigation began an investigation into trafficking activities of the Martinez's organization.

The criminal complaint alleges that investigators seized 61 pounds of cocaine owned by Martinez on April 25, 2000, as it was being smuggled into the United States from Mexico. In November 2001, agents seized approximately 50 pounds of cocaine supplied by Martinez as it was being smuggled from



An ICE agent examines a Ferrari Spyder sports car seized in a major drug trafficking case in California targeting an organization that smuggled cocaine into the U.S. and oversaw the distribution of the drug. The car, along with an armored Mercedes-Benz and almost \$670,000 in cash, was seized. Nine men were arrested, including the alleged ringleader, George Martinez of Downey, Calif.

Washington State into Canada.

From May 2003 through February 2004, investigators used court-authorized wiretaps on phones used by George Martinez and others. The wiretaps revealed George Martinez controlled an organization that smuggled large loads of cocaine from Mexico into the United States using cars fitted with secret compartments.

The criminal complaint alleges that Rodriguez provided the load vehicles to transport drugs and money and that Meraz and Arce arranged the delivery and storage of drugs in the United States and Mexico. Meraz and Gonzalez allegedly assisted George Martinez's distribution of cocaine.

The affidavit in support of the complaint alleges that George Martinez used profits from his drug trafficking to purchase numerous real properties in Southern California, often placing the assets under different

names to conceal his ownership of those assets. During the investigation, George Martinez told others that he had earned at least \$8 million in drug proceeds. Federal agents seized \$669,000 from a bank account in the name "George Martinez Investments."

In addition to ICE, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, IRS-Criminal Investigation and local investigators from Downey, Torrance and Fullerton, Los Angeles, the state of California and Orange County participated in the investigation, which was conducted as part of the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) program.

SMUGGLERS FACE CHARGES FOR DESERT DEATH MARCH

Two Americans and one Mexican arrested by ICE special agents in Douglas, Ariz., face federal charges for the death of a man who died during a human smuggling attempt that included a brutal march across the desert border.

BORDER SECURITY

Arrested on suspicion of human smuggling were United States citizens Rene Encinas, 28, and Salvador Antonio Garcia, 28, along with Agustin Perez-Pro, 26, a Mexican citizen.

On June 11, ICE special agents stopped a black Ford Expedition they suspected was being used by alien smugglers. While searching the interior of the vehicle, the agents discovered the body of an undocumented Brazilian national in the cargo compartment. The occupants had apparently been driving around trying to dispose of the body when they were stopped.

The agents and Douglas Police Department detectives developed evidence indicating that Encinas – the alleged kingpin of the human smuggling organization -- and the two other conspirators disregarded the victim's dehy-

drated condition after an arduous trek through the desert, allowing him to die without seeking medical attention.

"These criminals are the worst of the worst," said ICE Resident Agent-in-Charge Lee Morgan. "They consciously chose to let this man die an agonizing death. They didn't fire a shot, but they still pulled the trigger."

Following the arrests and discovery of the body, ICE special agents and Douglas Police Department detectives executed state search warrants at two residences here where they seized three vehicles, three handguns and more than \$322,000 in cash.

They later apprehended 14 undocumented Mexican nationals and another undocumented Brazilian national in a rented "stash" trailer on the outskirts of Douglas.

Encinas, Perez-Pro and Garcia will initially face federal charges for conspiracy to transport, harbor and smuggle aliens and may face an additional charge of death of an alien during the commission of a human smuggling attempt, which carries a possible maximum sentence of death or life in prison. They will also be charged with illegal possession of firearms.

ICE BREAKS DRUG, MONEY LAUNDERING RING IN BALTIMORE

A federal grand jury indicted 31 individuals on June 8 in connection with crimes arising from a massive drug trafficking and money laundering operation in the Baltimore-Washington metropolitan area, ICE announced last week.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

According to the indictment, the defendants trafficked cocaine, crack and heroin throughout the metropolitan area from at least as early as January 2001 through May 2004, receiving their narcotics from other organizations in New York, Los Angeles and the Caribbean region.

Some members of the organization reportedly used their drug proceeds to fraudulently purchase life insurance policies. Paulette Martin, one of the leaders of the organization, is alleged to have worked with an insurance broker in Burtonsville, Md., to acquire at least 17 life insurance policies opened on numerous individuals, many with criminal backgrounds of their own. Martin and her co-conspirators would then collect on the proceeds of the insurance policies when the individuals

died.

The investigation, known as "Operation Encore," was initiated in October 2002 by ICE investigators in Maryland. This investigation involved a multi-agency drug-money laundering task force. Over the last several weeks, the task force has executed search warrants throughout Maryland, Washington D.C. and New York, resulting in the arrest of 29 individuals on federal drug conspiracy and mail-wire fraud charges. The remaining two defendants are fugitives and are currently being sought.

Agents also seized eight handguns, a ballistic vest, large quantities of cocaine and heroin and over \$1 million in criminal proceeds from the organization.

"The charges demonstrate ICE's continuing commitment to target those exploiting America's borders and financial systems for criminal purposes," ICE Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia said. "With our Cornerstone initiative, ICE is uniquely positioned to combat sophisticated money laundering system like the life insurance scheme we uncovered here."

“VICTORIA 19” TRAGEDY RINGLEADER PLEADS GUILTY TO HUMAN SMUGGLING

A 26-year-old Honduran woman pleaded guilty June 14 to being the ringleader of a human smuggling operation that left 19 aliens dead after they were jammed without air or water in a tractor-trailer and abandoned in Texas last year.

PUBLIC SECURITY

The woman, Karla Chávez, was arrested exactly a year ago, after fleeing to Honduras on May 14, 2003, the day the bodies were discovered.

Prosecutors said Chávez agreed to cooperate in prosecuting five remaining defendants in the case. She faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without parole.

Chávez admitted she had hired five smugglers, or coyotes, to bring the aliens to South Texas from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, the Dominican Republic and Mexico. Relatives in the United States had paid Ms. Chávez from \$1,500 to \$1,900, prosecutors said, to ensure that the aliens arrived in Houston safely.

Near midnight on May 13, at least 74 people were loaded onto a tractor-trailer that had neither air conditioning nor water, and the aliens soon began banging on the walls and trying to poke holes for air.

The driver heard the screams and panicked, then stopped the truck at a gas station near Victoria, Tex., where he was seen in a videotape purchasing gallon jugs of water.

When he opened the trailer doors to give the immigrants the water, he discovered 17 of them dead. One was a 5-year-old boy. Two other people died later.

GARCIA TESTIFIES ON INTEGRATION OF LEGACY U. S. CUSTOMS INTO ICE

Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia, testifying before a House committee June 17, said that the integration of the former U.S. Customs Service into ICE gives the agency unique authorities and greater flexibility in meeting its homeland security mission.

ECONOMIC SECURITY

In his testimony before the House Ways and Means Committee's Subcommittee on Trade, Garcia focused on the merger of the legacy U.S. Customs' Office of Investigations (OI) and Air and Marine Operations (AMO) into the ICE structure. He also re-

viewed the proposed ICE budget request for Fiscal Year (FY) 2005.

In his testimony on the legacy Customs OI, Garcia cited the work done by the National Security Investigations Division. Garcia also discussed in detail the importance of the Cornerstone economic security initiative in ICE's efforts to protect the nation's financial security.

“Cornerstone is an excellent example of how we are integrating Customs and Immigration authorities and, as a result, we are more effective in identifying vulnerabilities in the financial and trade sectors--vulnerabilities that terrorists and other criminal organizations might exploit to earn, move or store illicit proceeds to finance their operations,” Garcia said.

Garcia told the Subcommittee that in ICE, AMO is a stand-alone division that provides airspace security, law enforcement support, and an interdiction capability and has become an integral part of the ICE mission. He cited the work done by the AMO Operations Center and noted that ICE AMO has performed a wide range of missions, from airspace security to drug interdiction and air support for the U.S. Secret Service.

Regarding the ICE budget, Garcia said the President's FY 2005 budget will continue to strengthen ICE's efforts to protect the homeland, as well as continue its traditional enforcement mission. The President's FY 2005 Budget request seeks \$4.011 billion for ICE, \$302 million more than FY 2004, which represents an increase of eight percent, Garcia said.

“While many challenges lie ahead, we continue to build a professional law enforcement agency from the powerful tools and authorities we have been given,” Garcia said.

ICE AMO MARINE OFFICERS HOOK PHONY FISHERMEN NEAR SAN DIEGO

Eight people posing as anglers while being smuggled into the United States aboard two recreational boats off Point Loma, Calif., near San Diego June 13 were arrested after ICE Air and Marine Operations (AMO) marine enforcement officers noticed the fishing poles they held weren't rigged to catch fish.

The illegal aliens, including two previously deported felons, were seated on the decks of the two 15-foot fishing boats that were outfitted for smuggling with extra fuel tanks hidden under the seats.

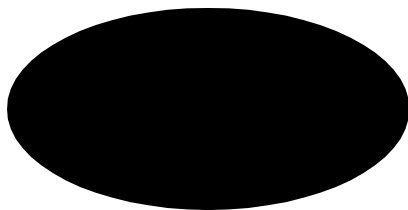
The ICE officers alerted the U.S. Border Patrol and the Coast Guard after spotting the vessels as they crossed the international border.

Inside ICE

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), responsible for the enforcement of border, economic, infrastructure and transportation security laws.

ICE seeks to prevent acts of terrorism by targeting the people, money and materials that support terrorist and criminal activities.

SAVING CHILDREN



Assistant Secretary Michael Garcia speaks about ICE's Operation Predator at an event marking the 20th anniversary of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. At left is Ernie Allen, President of the Board of Directors of NCMEC. At right are Reva Walsh and her husband, television host John Walsh.